



Sam Brownback

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BROWNBACK CHAIRS IRAQ HEARING

WASHINGTON – As Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback today chaired a hearing entitled “The Liberation of Iraq: A Progress Report.” His statement follows.

“I cannot understand why President Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act when he had absolutely no intention of implementing the provisions of that law. It is hard for me to figure out why Administration officials from President Clinton and Vice President Gore on down keep insisting that they are interested in ousting Saddam, and yet not one official of this Administration has been willing to take even the most minimal step toward that end.

“Let me just review what the Congress – with complete bipartisanship – has done in trying to press forward an Iraq policy: Since 1998, I count nine House or Senate resolutions calling for democracy in Iraq, promoting a war crimes tribunal for Iraq, demanding compliance with U.N. resolutions. We have authorized tens of millions of dollars to support war crimes research and for the opposition.

“As far as the Administration is concerned, in the last two years alone, the Clinton-Gore team has presided over the abolition of UNSCOM, the end of the sanctions review for a significant number of products imported into Iraq, and a staggering erosion of international support for isolating the Saddam Hussein regime.

“This is not a complex matter, but the Clinton Administration has failed to explain why it is imperative that sanctions remain on Iraq. They have failed to remind the world at large that Saddam Hussein has killed tens of thousands of his own people, and that it is his choice and his choice alone whether sanctions are lifted. They seem to forget that Saddam’s devotion to amassing weapons of mass destruction is the only remaining obstacle to Iraq’s rehabilitation.

“As far as the opposition is concerned, the Administration has disbursed approximately \$20,000 of \$97 million in available funds under the Iraq Liberation Act. Of \$10 million appropriated for the opposition and for the prosecution of war crimes in FY 2000, nothing – NOTHING – has been spent.

“On Monday, representatives from the Iraqi National Congress met with Vice President Gore. Miraculously, on Tuesday, the Administration announced that 140 INC men would be trained under the ILA. They also announced they would support an amendment we have in this year’s foreign operations appropriations bill, giving \$15 million to the INC for humanitarian deliveries into Iraq.

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“This is the first time since the signature of the Iraq Liberation Act that we have seen someone in

this Administration galvanized to do something for the opposition. The usual routine we in the Congress hear is: 'can't do it, won't do it, don't want to do it, and don't like them anyway.' Most memorably, General Zinni, the soon to be former Commander of Centcom, announced that the Congress was 'stupid' to support the opposition.

"Either Saddam is a long term threat, or he is not. If he is, then we must do something. Short of invading Iraq once again, we must support the opposition. The opposition is not a group of girl scouts, nor is it a group of Jeffersonian democrats. It is an agglomeration of very different people in different groups who have been crushed under Saddam Hussein for decades. They are the people willing to work with the United States to overthrow Saddam Hussein; they have the courage to come to us. They have been treated with complete contempt by this Administration.

"To date the Vice President has done nothing for this group; maybe this week's meeting will mark a turning point, but maybe it's just politics as usual. We'll soon find out," Brownback said.